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THE SPIRITUALITY

OF

THE CHURCH.

[The following pages are reprinted from a series of articles in the ST. LOUIS PRESBYTERIAN reviewing Rev. Dr. S. J. Baird's pamphlet on "Reunion." Having shown the "Board" system and laxness in Doctrine to be hinderances to organic union, the writer demonstrates that the difference as to the spirituality of the Church is the insuperable obstacle.—PUBS.]

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHURCH.

Some preliminary matter.

a. My remarks here are designed to cover all that part of this discussion which Dr. B. has treated under the head of "Political action," etc., (pp. 14 to 44 of his "Review," exclusive of "Slavery and Race Question" misplaced.)

b. It is much to be desired that the importance of this doctrine to the purity and peace of the Church and to the success of her mission, should be clearly recognized; that it should be more fully developed and distinctly defined than it has hitherto been; that our Church should embrace it more heartily, act upon it more consistently, prize it more highly, and guard it more jealously Should the present discussion, painful as it is, tend to these results, it will prove a blessing

c. Dr. Baird is to be thanked for his forcible presentation of the *wrong view* of this doctrine, and for bringing out plainly those features of it which need discussion. He is manifestly right in requiring all those who disagree with him to join issue upon such questions as these: Is the Church of God *competent*, in *all* questions of *morals*, to act as arbiter, not only for those within her pale, but for all men individually, and for all as organized either into voluntary associations or *civil governments?* Is she *authorized*, in the Word of God, so to act? Is it either her *duty* or her *privilege* to lend her aid either as a *patron* or an *ally* to *all* parties and projects, not in themselves corrupt, for advancing *moral* reforms in society and in civil government? He is right in regarding the time for vague generalities as past. He has formed a just estimate of the present condition of the public mind in recognizing the fact that, so far as this discussion goes, the political, sectional, war issues of twenty-five years ago have, *as such*, no interest for our Church, and no proper bearing on the question of union with "our sister Church." It is only as the "political deliverances" of "our sister Church" *are indicative of her fixed principles and policy*, and not of the unhappy passions of an exciting hour, that they have any proper place or importance in this controversy.

d. The personal attacks made by Dr. Baird upon Drs. Palmer and Dabney have absolutely no relevancy to the matter in hand. It will avail little with thoughtful, truth-loving men, to show that the great and good men just named have been inconsistent with their principles, *provided that their principles are right.* We propose to hold by their principles, whether those brethren do or do not, can or cannot defend their consistency. It is not the privilege even of the best, the wisest and the truest always to be consistent.

e. The same remark applies to the acts of our Synods and Assembly, *and also to those of "our sister Church."* The question is: Are there any distinctive principles upon this point separating us from "our sister Church?" not whether our acts or hers have always been consistent with our respective principles. It

is not true that "the unimpeachable fidelity of our Church to her spiritual constitution and Head has been assumed, or asserted, as fundamental to the case." No such assumption or assertion has been made, or needs to be made. The writer hopes to show that "our sister Church" has well defined views in regard to the issue raised under ("c"), and that she has been most *rigidly and unhappily consistent* in carrying them out. He proposes to admit that our views have not been so well defined, and consequently not so consistently carried out. He proposes, farther, to attempt by God's help, to show what were the views of Dr. Thornwell and the Missouri and Kentucky men upon the question of the spirituality of the Church; to show that the doctrine of these great and good men upon this point, while not elaborated as fully, nor enunciated with as much precision as could be desired, was, as far as it went, sound and Scriptural and was diametrically opposed to the doctrine of "our sister Church"; to show that their doctrine was not originated during the war, nor in connection with war issues; to show that it is not a doctrine of Southern-born men to the exclusion of those born at the North, or of secessionists to the exclusion of unionists, and so to show that it is not, and cannot be, in any sense *a sectional issue;* to show that our Church *as a Church* has happily *committed* herself to the true theory, though she may unhappily have departed from it in moments of excitement; to show that "our sister Church" *as a Church* has unhappily *committed herself* to the wrong theory, and has unhappily been most consistent in her adherence to it to this very hour.

f. The charge of *political* sectionalism, brought against our Church, and more particularly against the opposers of Organic Union in our Church, is a most grievous affront and intolerable injustice. It is time for brethren to drop this method of attack. Let them show us our inconsistencies as a Church, and as individuals, and let them magnify and gloat over them as much as they choose, but let them cease to charge upon us base and dishonorable motives.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DISCUSSION.

Those who are disposed to inform themselves before writing upon this subject, or forming an opinion upon it, will find that the origin of this discussion dates as far back as 1848, and is not even remotely connected with any sectional issue. In the Assembly of that year, Dr. Thornwell, as chairman of the "Committee on Bills and Overtures," introduced a paper setting forth the relation of the Church to "Societies for Moral Reform." This paper was called for by a request for a deliverance from the Assembly in the interests of certain temperance societies. (See Collected Writings, Vol. IV, p. 469). It contains the germs of Dr. Thornwell's doctrine upon the mission, sphere and functions of the Church. These germs were more fully (and consistently) developed in a paper from his pen submitted to the Synod of South Carolina in 1851. This was a Report on "The Relation of the Church to Slavery." (See Collected Writings, Vol. VI, pp. 382–384). This paper, however, has never figured in this discussion. The controversy opened in real earnest in the year 1859. In the Assembly of that year, Dr. Thornwell made a speech on "African Colonization (See Writings, Vol. IV, p. 472 et seq.), which excited attention not only in that body, but throughout the entire Church. In this speech, he simply presented in a more perfectly developed and consistent form, the principles of his paper on "Societies for Moral Reform," written, as we have seen, in 1848.

These facts need no comment. They are a complete rebuttal of the shallow taunt that those who oppose Dr. Baird are seeking to make our Church the "legatee of the principles and affiliations of an obsolete political party."

What political party was the champion of Temperance in 1848? What political party was the advocate of African Colonization in 1859? What political party during those years ever introduced into its platform a plank bearing on the Church and "Societies for Moral Reform." What connection is it possible to devise between these successive papers from Dr. Thornwell and the sectional issues which in 1861 rent the country? Let the reader farther consider that these Temperance and Colonization schemes merely furnished *the occasion* for the reassertion of principles as old at least as the 2nd Book of Discipline of the Kirk of Scotland, or rather, as some of us think, as old as the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. Finally, let it be understood that one object of Dr. Thornwell in reasserting these venerable and sacred principles, was to guard the Church against allying herself with any political faction, North or South. He foresaw the ruin these factions were about to bring upon the country. He desired to preserve the unity of the Church even in the sad event of the disruption of the Union. Dr. Chas. Hodge is authority for this last statement. He says: "In the year 1859, Dr. Thornwell opposed the recommendation of the Colonization Society on the principle above stated. In private, if not in public, he took the ground that the division of the country was a certain event. He however wished to prevent the division of the Church as consequent upon the disruption of our National Union. To secure that end, he said that it was necessary to adopt the principle that the only duty of the Church, as a teacher, was to preach the Gospel, to labor for the salvation of men." (Prin. Rev. '64, p. 562.)

THE ISSUE AS MADE IN THE WRITINGS OF DR. THORNWELL, THE MISSOURI AND KENTUCKY DIVINES, AND DR. HODGE.

1. Sources of information. The reader who desires to test for himself the accuracy of the statements to be made under this head, can do so by reference to the following authorities:

a. Thornwell's Collected Writings, Vol. IV, pp, 382–384, 439–441, 446–451, 469–478.

b. Dr. Stuart Robinson's Lecture on "The Relation of the Secular and Spiritual Powers," delivered before Maryland Institute in 1859; Outline of his speech in General Assembly of 1862 as given in Prin. Rev. for '62, pp, 513, 514; "The Declaration and Testimony" from the pen of Dr. Samuel R. Wilson; "An Address to the Presbyterian People of God" issued from St. Louis, Mo., in 1866, signed by Dr. Rob't P. Farris and others; History of Complaint of Presbyterian Church of St. Charles, Mo., in pamphlet entitled, "True Loyalty and the Independence of the Church"; "Spirituality and Independence of the Church," a speech delivered by Dr. H. J. Van Dyke on the floor of the Synod of New York in 1864; Letter of Synod of Kentucky to our own Assembly in 1867.

c. Dr. Hodge's views will be found in July Nos. of Prin. Rev., for years 1859, pp. 611, etc.; 1861 (Jan No.), pp. 1 and 167; 1862, pp. 522, etc.; 1864, pp. 561, etc., and also in same for years 1865, 1866 in articles on General Assembly. The writer has given these references not only to establish his own accuracy, but under a deep conviction that our younger men owe it to themselves, to the past, and to the future to inform themselves as fully as possible upon the momentuous issues involved in any action looking to organic union with "our sister Church."

2. *Matters irrelevant to the real issue.* The issue between Drs. Thornwell and Hodge, and Dr. Hodge and the Missouri and Kentucky divines was never on the following (now somewhat threadbare phrases) "good *forms* of

sound words," viz., "God alone is Lord of the conscience," etc.; "All Church power . . . is only ministerial and declarative," etc.; "Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing," etc., for which see action of Assembly at Omaha and correspondence of the Committees recently published. One first wonders and then wearies at the eternal "see-saw" over these stock phrases. Who is mad enough to suppose that our Church is sole heir to these ancient and venerable formulas? Who supposes that "our sister Church," even in her greatest frenzy, went the length of exscinding them from her Standards? The writer, for one, is ready to admit that, so far as the *mere words* go, "our sister Church" can prove that she has always adhered to them. This fact indeed is one that needs no proof to any one at all acquainted with her history. She stood firmly *upon* these words, as mere words, when, in 1861, she passed the "Spring Resolutions;" when, in 1862, she passed Dr. Robt. J. Breckinridge's manifesto upon the "State of the Church and of the Country;" when, in 1863, she passed the National Flag report; when in 1862, she endorsed Mr. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the Republican administration, as an administration, and the Usurpations of the military in the case of the St. Louis Presbytery; when, in 1865, she acquiesced in similar military usurpations in the case of the Synod of Missouri, and passed her paper on "The State of the Country," making the territory occupied by our Church missionary ground for "loyal" missionaries; and her zeal for these venerable *forms* reached a towering height when, in 1866, without even the forms of law, she cut off the ecclesiastical head of Louisville Presbytery for intimating that her practice, in this respect, did not conform to her creed. From that day to this, she has stood *upon* them, while seeking to shape the foreign and domestic policy of our government, in reference to such matters as our treaty with China, Chinese Immigration, Polygamy in Utah, "Civil Government and industrial schools in Alaska" and the Temperance question.

The issues handed down to us from the founders of our Church and the framers of our doctrine on this point, do not relate to *mere words*, but to the *meaning* of the words—not to certain *mere formulæ*, but to the *contents* of those formulæ. They are simple and clear-cut, and may be stated as follows, viz:

a. What is the *true meaning* or *interpretation* of those clauses in our Standards which set forth the powers, sphere and functions of the Church? "The interpretation of the law, is the law."

b. Does the Church conform her practice to the Standards as *truly interpreted?*

Dr. Hodge took issue with Dr. Thornwell on the first point, and with the Missouri and Kentucky divines on both points. "Our sister Church" followed Dr. Hodge. Our own Church followed Dr. Thornwell, and the Missouri and Kentucky brethren. The issue is one *not as to words*, but as to *the principles designed to be set forth by the words.*

DR. HODGE'S POSITION.

1. *As stated by himself.* The following extracts from Dr. Hodge's pen will give his views in regard to the province and functions of the Church.

a. I will first give some extracts to show that, all during the war, even while endorsing and defending "our sister Church's" most flagrant intermeddlings with "civil affairs which belong to the commonwealth," and her most shameless surrenders of the rights of Christ, as alone King in Zion, he affirmed "the spiritual character of the Church as separated from the kingdoms of this world, and having no other Head but the Lord Jesus Christ," etc., and all the

other counts and specifications of the famous threadbare "Missouri-Omaha" paper.

For instance, in 1862, *when defending*, with an astuteness and zeal worthy of a better cause, *Dr. Breckinridge's paper on the "State of the Church and of the Country,"* he wrote: "It is the doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Presbyterian Church that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world; that it is not subject as to faith, worship, or discipline to the authority of the State; and that it has no right to interfere with the State, or give ecclesiastical judgment in matters pertaining to State policy." (Prin. Rev. July 1862, p. 522.)

In 1864, when reviewing the action of the Assembly in the case of the complaint of Pine street church and its pastor against the Presbytery of St. Louis, he wrote: "There is indeed a sense of the words in which the Church has nothing to do with politics. She has no right to pronounce judgment in purely secular matters, or upon such questions which (as) ordinarily divide men into political parties." (Prin. Rev. July 1864, p. 562.)

In 1859, *when antagonizing* the views presented by Dr. Thornwell in his speech on African Colonization, he wrote: "It is true that the Church is not of this world; that it is not, as such, concerned in the affairs of the world; that it has nothing to do with politics, commerce, agriculture, or any secular enterprise, as such." (Prin. Rev. July 1869, p. 614.)

These sentiments all have an exceedingly pleasant *sound*. And if men of sense were capable of forming a judgment upon mere sounds, these extracts of which the Missouri-Omaha paper is but an amplification, would be an end of controversy. Unfortunately these are not the only sounds that reach an attentive ear. Unfortunately these sounds are, as it were, but lingering echoes of a theory receding into practical oblivion—complimentary formulæ uttered at the funeral obsequies of a defunct theory as it is honorably laid to rest to make place for a living one. The following extracts also have, in the main, a fine "ring."

"The plain principle which determines the legitimate sphere of action of the Church, is, that it is limited to teaching and enforcing moral and religious truth; and to such truths, as revealed and determined by the sacred Scriptures." (Prin. Rev. July 1864, p. 562.) For a similar and even more striking statement to the same effect as that just given, the reader must be referred to the Prin. Rev. July 1859, p. 616, bottom. These statements, while marred by a fatal obscurity upon one essential point, have still, as was said, in the main, a fine ring about them. The point at which they are obscure is, as we shall see, the very hinge of the controversy. Note the language—"and to such truths (*i. e.*, to moral and religious truths) *as revealed and determined by the sacred Scriptures.*" Just here, Dr. Baird's query is in order, "Does this mean that there are moral" and even religious "truths which" have not been "revealed and determined by the sacred Scriptures?" "That this query is not uncalled for," to us Dr. Baird's language once more, "appears from," Dr. Hodge's singular defence when charged with inconsistency in opposing the "Spring Resolutions," and yet defending Dr. Breckinridge's odiously partizan and even bloody paper on the "State of the Church and of the Country." He said: "Those resolutions (*i. e.*, the "Spring Resolutions") declared it to be the duty of Southern brethren to maintain the integrity of the union, and to sustain the general government. *Whether this was their duty or not, depends upon the decision of a political question.*" Dr. Baird, it seems, would have appointed a committee to investigate and decide the "political question," with a view to preparing the way for the Church to decide the moral issue. But Dr. Hodge, less consistent with his

own theory, but more consistent with the teachings of our Standards and our Master, than our venerable brother, said: "That such decision transcends the prerogative of the Church, it seems to us, impossible to deny." From this, one might fairly infer that Dr. Hodge held that it is not always within the province of the Church to decide questions of duty. The writer begs pardon for this digression. His excuse for it is, that he feels that the point to which attention has been called, lies at the very vitals of this controversy. To him this whole discussion is but an empty and wearisome logomachy, unless it be admitted that the point in issue is: Are there any questions of morals the decision of which in the Word of God is relegated strictly to the individual conscience, to the exclusion of all ecclesiastical interference? The writer for his own part has come to the deliberate conclusion that there are great *moral questions* upon which the Church in her corporate capacity cannot pass without endangering her peace, purity and mission, and without ruthlessly trampling upon the most sacred rights of conscience of her members. He believes further, that there are multitudes of schemes for the moral improvement and elevation of the race, many of them good enough in themselves, to the advancement of which the Church, as such, cannot lawfully lend her endorsement either as patron or ally. These propositions he proposes to defend at the proper time.

The above extracts have been given in fairness to the reader, and in justice to Dr. Hodge. Sometimes a man ought to have credit for his inconsistencies. In weighing them, however, and estimating their true position in Dr. Hodge's theory, the thoughtful reader will take into account the current of the distinguished Princetonian's thought, conduct and influence. What these were, may be learned from the following extracts and facts.

b. Extracts and Facts illustrative of the distinguishing Features of Dr. Hodge's Theory.

In 1859, he wrote: "It follows from the great commission of the Church that it is her prerogative and duty to testify for the truth and law of God whereever she can make her voice heard; not only to her own people, *but to kings and rulers*," etc. The words italicized are those to which attention is asked. The doctrine laid down is that the Church has a mission "to kings and rulers," not only as individuals, but in their official character and capacity. She is a Monitress, divinely appointed, to have an oversight of all human legislators and legislation, to see that it conforms to the principles of eternal rectitude.

In the same connection, he wrote: "It is her duty, not only to announce the truth, but to *apply it to particular cases and persons* . . . . . If the State pass any laws contrary to the law of God, then it is the duty of the Church to whom God has committed the great work of asserting and maintaining His truth and will to protect [protest] and remonstrate." (Prin. Rev. July 1859, p. 615 under 4). This plainly means that it is the duty of the Church through her various Courts to signify her approval or disapproval of particular *legislators* ("persons") and of particular legislation ("cases"), not merely by proclaiming the truth contrary to, and corrective of, the errors embodied in it, but by making these specific persons and their acts the objects of her animadversions. That this is a fair interpretation of his language appears from the following words used in immediate connection with those that precede: "If the State not only violates the Sabbath, but makes it a condition to holding office that others should violate it, or if it legalizes piracy, or concubinage, or polygamy: . . . . . if, in short, it does anything directly contrary to the law of God, the Church is bound to make that law known and *set it home upon the consciences of all concerned.*" The following language also is significant in this connection:

"The Bible gives us no rule for deciding the litigated questions about public improvements . . . . . But it does give us rules for pronouncing about slave laws, the slave trade, obedience to magistrates, *treason*, *rebellion*, *revolution*. To shut her mouth on these questions is to make her unfaithful to her high vocation." (Prin. Rev. July 1864, p. 562). Accordingly, in 1861, we find him writing in this strain:

"The doctrine that Christian ministers, as such, and Church Courts have nothing to do with politics, as all other theories, either false or half true, has given way like tow on the touch of fire, when the test occasion comes. If by politics be meant the policy of States in reference to secular affairs, then it is true that the Gospel minister has nothing to do with them in the pulpit. But if by politics we mean the principles of civil government, and the duties thence resulting, then politics belong to the higher sphere of morals: and morals is the science of duty, and duty is determined by the law of God. If ministers are not set to expound that law, to declare to the people what God would have them do, then they have in all ages sadly mistaken their calling. The faithful messengers of God under all dispensations of the Church, have felt officially bound to teach kings and people their duty, and tell them what God, who is King of nations, as well as King of saints, would have them do." (Prin. Rev. 1841, p. 167.) What is here asserted as the duty of ministers is elsewhere asserted to be "the right and obligation" of the Church in her corporate capacity. (Prin. Rev. July 1859, p. 616, 2nd Sec.)

Again he writes: "There are occasions when political questions rise into the sphere of morals and religion; when the rule for political action is to be sought not in considerations of State policy, but in the law of God."

And again: "In the Assembly of 1861 he (*i. e.* Dr. Hodge) stated publicly that his objection to Dr. Spring's resolution was not founded in the assumption that the Church had nothing "to do with politics," and that if these resolutions were presented in the Synod of New Jersey he would cordially support them. And accordingly he has repeatedly voted for similar resolutions in Presbytery and Synod." (Prin. Rev. July 1864, p. 563).

From these and other passages that might be cited, it is perfectly clear that Dr. Hodge held and taught that it is the right and duty of the Church in certain emergencies, of which she herself is to be sole judge, to decide what is the true policy for the State to pursue and to decide for her members and citizens generally, what are their political duties. He thought that it is her right and duty speaking ministerially, *i. e.*, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to require her members, and all whom she can make hear her voice, to pursue certain courses, and desist from certain other courses in their capacity as citizens—leaving them no alternative but to submit, or place themselves in rebellion against Christ and His Church. If there is any question as to the justice of this statement it may be settled by an appeal to facts.

In 1862, as we have seen, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge introduced into the Assembly his famous deliverance on the "State of the Church and of the Country." This is a paper which to be appreciated must be read. It has evidently escaped Dr. Baird's attention. Those who will examine it in its historical connection will probably see where Dr. Palmer obtained some of the material for his rhetoric in 1870. This document purports to be an expression of the "*solemn convictions*" and "*deliberate judgment*" of the body from which it proceeds. The claim is not without foundation since the discussion of it absorbed much, if not most, of the time of the Assembly, and it was finally passed by a vote of 206 ayes, to twenty nays. It farther declares that it is designed "for the guid-

ance of all over whom the Lord Jesus Christ has given us any office of instruction, or power of government." The following are specimens of the Assembly's exercise of its ministerial and declarative powers in this deliverance:

"Peace has wickedly been superseded by war in its worst form throughout the whole land; and public order has been wickedly superseded by rebellion, anarchy and violence in the whole Southern portion of the Union . . . This whole treason, rebellion, anarchy, fraud, and violence, is utterly contrary to the dictates of natural religion and morality, and is plainly condemned by the revealed will of God. It is the clear and solemn duty of the national government to preserve at whatever cost the National Union and Constitution . . . . . to crush force by force, etc. . . . . It is the bounden duty of the people who compose this great nation, each one in his several place and degree, to uphold the Federal Government, and every State Government, and all persons in authority, whether civil or military, in all their lawful and proper acts unto the end hereinbefore set forth," viz., crushing the rebellion. It further demands from all its ministers and members not only obedience to the Federal Government but loyalty of heart to this same central National Government. It makes it disloyalty to Christ for its ministers or members to even think that the non-seceding States had made a mistake in their interpretation of the Constitution, or in the policy adopted to secure compliance with their interpretation. It settled all the questions settled by the Spring resolutions and many others. And this is what Dr. Hodge says of this document:

"So far as we can see there is no solid objection *on the score of principle* to the adoption of Dr. Breckinridge's paper" (Prin. Rev. July '62, p. 615). He then proceeds to draw a distinction between it and the Spring resolutions. His distinction amounts simply to this, that, when the Spring resolutions were offered, the representatives of Presbyteries within the bounds of the seceding States were still members of the Assembly. Whereas, when Dr. Breckinridge's paper was offered, the body was composed entirely of representatives of Presbyteries within the borders of non-seceding States. What this has to do with the real issues raised in Dr. Breckinridge's paper, the writer is at a loss to see. For, if the question as to whether it was the duty of our Southern brethren to maintain the integrity of the Union, and to sustain the General Government, depended upon the decision of a political question, viz., the correctness or incorrectness of the Calhoun theory—then, just as clearly the question as to whether these Southern brethren were in rebellion, so that it was the duty of our Northern brethren to crush them by force, turned precisely upon the same political question. And if, in 1861, the Assembly had no right to decide that our Southern brethren ought to maintain the integrity of the Union, then, in 1862, she had no right to declare them rebels and to hound on the dogs of war. But Dr. Hodge's consistency, or inconsistency, need not detain us. For, whether he be consistent or inconsistent with himself, one thing is clear, and that is, that he wrested the right of deciding these "politico-moral" questions from the individual and vested it in the Church.

That our statement of his position as given above is correct, is further confirmed by the fact that when, in 1864, the Assembly passed a paper which enumerated "six party measures," viz., "the President's abolition proclamation and decree; the enlistment of negro soldiers; the organization of the labor of the freedmen; the President's declared policy in regard to reconstruction; the emancipation measures in the Border States; and the proposed amendment of the Constitution of the United States abolishing slavery"—a paper that drew from Dr. Van Dyke, on the floor of the Synod of New York his memorable

speech in defence of the "Spirituality and Independence of the Church"—Dr. Hodge endorsed its action. (Prin. Rev., July '64, pp. 538 et seqq.)

The above extracts must suffice for the setting forth of Dr. Hodge's theory of the relation of the Church to politics. The following brings before us another phase of his theory of the province and functions of the Church. Commenting on Dr. Thornwell's speech on African Colonization, he wrote:

"And now the doctrine is advanced by one of the very foremost men of our whole communion, that the Church is in such sense a spiritual body that she has no right even to recommend a benevolent society. She must confine herself to a purely spiritual vocation. She cannot denounce evil or patronize good outside of her pale. It is not her business to attend "to the colonization of races, or to the arrest of the slave-trade, or to anything else but to the immediate spiritual affairs of men." (Prin. Rev. July '59, p. 613).

From this it is fair to assume that he himself held that the Church has a right to recommend benevolent societies, is not bound to confine herself to a purely spiritual vocation, may patronize good and denounce evil outside of her own pale, is warranted in attending to the colonization of races, the arrest of the slave-trade, and other matters not immediately connected with the salvation of men. But again, in this same article he writes:

"Presbyterians have always held that the Church is bound to hold forth in the face of all men the truth and law of God, to testify against infractions of that law by rulers or people, to lend her countenance and support to all means within and without her jurisdiction, which she believes to be designed and wisely adapted to promote the glory and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. This our Church has always done, and we pray God she may continue to do, even to the end." (Prin. Rev. July '59, p. 618).

The reader will not forget the precise point to which Dr. Hodge is speaking, or rather writing. It was not asserted by Dr. Thornwell that the Church is not to hold forth the truth and law of God in the face of all men, nor that she was not to testify against all infractions of that law by rulers and people,—but that she is to testify by holding up the truth which was trampled upon in the unrighteous law, and not by animadverting directly either upon the wicked law or the wicked lawgivers. It is to this proposition that Dr. Hodge objects. It is the opposite of this he designs to maintain, viz., that the Church is to denounce the law in direct and specific terms and to "rebuke and exhort" the legislators, as legislators. Dr. Thornwell did not assert that the Church was not to lend her countenance to all divinely appointed instrumentalities for advancing Christ's Kingdom and glory—but that she was not to stamp the imprimatur of her Lord upon instrumentalities not of His ordaining, but devised of man, and that too, not primarily as a means of evangelizing the heathen, *but of accomplishing this in connection with other ends.* This is the position which Dr. Hodge assails. It is the opposite of this that he defends—viz.; that such societies of *man's devising* as are designed and wisely adapted, either directly, or indirectly, either primarily or incidentally, to prepare the way of the Lord, are to be taken under the patronage of the Church, and to be by her, in the exercise of her ministerial and declarative power, stamped with Christ's approval.

Other extracts to the same effect might be given, but these will suffice.

This completes the presentation of Dr. Hodge's view upon the province and functions of the Church. Let us next notice

THE POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT TAKEN BY DR. THORNWELL AND THE MISSOURI AND KENTUCKY DIVINES.

1. *Preliminary remarks.* Dr. Thornwell's views upon this important sub-

ject evidently underwent a decided development between the years 1848 and 1861. There are facts, however, which seem to the writer to indicate that even at the latter date they had not attained that perfect symmetry which doubtless would have characterized them had his life been spared longer. In illustration of this statement, it is only necessary to allude to his paper on the "Relation of the State to Christ," which was submitted to our first Assembly at Augusta, in 1861, but subsequently withdrawn. It is hard to harmonize the positions of this paper with the known current of Dr. Thornwell's views upon the mission, sphere and functions of the Church. Fortunately, however, he has laid down the fundamental principles of his doctrine on this subject with such distinctness as to enable us to detect his own minor inconsistencies, and to leave us no excuse for making a stumbling block of them.

The Missouri and Kentucky divines who espoused Dr. Thornwell's views, were from the first exceedingly clear in their statement of them, and were to the last consistent in their adherence to them. They are the men, as it seems to the writer, who are entitled to the honor of having stated this important truth with the greatest accuracy, and vindicated it under the most trying circumstances. There will not be the same need of copious extracts here that there was in presenting Dr. Hodge's views, for the reader is presumably familiar already with the history of opinion on this subject in our own Church, as set forth in the writings of Dr. Thornwell, "The Declaration and Testimony," and "the Letter of the Synod of Kentucky" to our Assembly in 1867. If, however, the reader belongs to the younger generation, let me urge him to acquaint himself speedily with these historic documents.

2. *Extracts showing what Dr. Thornwell and the Missouri and Kentucky Divines taught in reference to the relation of Church and State.*

a. The mission of the Church. On this point the following passages from Dr. Thornwell's pen will give the reader a fair idea of his views:

"What then is the Church? It is not, as we fear too many are disposed to regard it, a moral institute of universal good, whose business is to wage war upon every form of human ill, whether social, civil, political or moral, and to patronize every expedient which a romantic benevolence may suggest as likely to contribute to human comfort, or to mitigate the inconveniences of life. . . . It has no commission to construct society afresh, to adjust its elements in different proportions, to re-arrange the distribution of its classes, or to change the forms of its political constitutions." (Collected Writings, Vol. IV, pp. 382, 383.)

Again; "It is her mission (*i. e.*, the Church's) to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men from the curse of the law. She has nothing to do with the voluntary associations of men for various civil and social purposes, that are outside of her pale. . . . The Lord Jesus Christ has never given His Church a commission to be identified with them. The great aim of the Church is to deliver men from sin, death and hell. She has no mission to care for the things and become entangled with the policy of this world. . . . The Church deals with men *as men*, as fallen sinners standing *in need of salvation;* not as citizens of the commonwealth, or philanthropists, or members of society." (Writings, Vol. IV, p. 473.)

From these statements it is perfectly plain that had Dr. Thornwell been asked what is *the* mission of the Church he would have replied: To glorify God *in the salvation of sinners.* According to him her mission is not to nations as nations, not to kings and legislatures in their official character, but to men as *individuals*, not to individuals as citizens but as *sinners*, not to elevate their morals but instrumentally to *renew their hearts* by the truth. That the faithful

adherence to her mission would be attended by many marvelous and blesse d effects upon human society and government he did not deny. All that h e claimed was that such effects were *strictly incidental* consequences of her mission, and that just in proportion as she busied herself with the production of these incidental benefits to the neglect of her real mission, just in that proportion would she jeopardize both.

The views of the Missouri and Kentucky Divines on this point accorded entirely with those of Dr. Thornwell. This appears from the following extract from "An address to the Presbyterian people of God" issued from St. Louis, Mo., June 5th, 1866, and signed by such men as Drs. S. R. Wilson, Stuart Robinson, R. P. Farris, Jas. H. Brookes. It condemns the "Church-State heresy of New England" because it proclaimed it to be "the duty of Christians to make our political government the *Christian* commonwealth," in utter derogation of the crown rights of Zion's King, who has established the Christian commonwealth separate and distinct from the *political* commonwealth, which He has ordained in the hands of the civil magistrate. (See Address, p. 3.) From this it is evident that these distinguished men held that the Church has no mission to evangelize the *commonwealth* as such, but simply the *individual sinners* composing its citizens. They with Dr. Thornwell rejected the idea that the Church of this dispensation is either a theocracy or semi-theocracy. Dr. Stuart Robinson, in his lecture on the "Relation of the Secular and Spiritual Power" expressly maintains that the Church as a government "cannot" recognize the officers of the State, as such," but only "as church members." In other words the Church, as such, does not know whether our ruler is a president or a king, whether we live under a despotism or a republic. She does not know what in their official capacity our legislators have done, or purpose doing. She has no mission in any way to "advise, direct or assist" them, to rebuke or exhort them. To her, they and their doings, so far as their official character goes, are as though they were not.

b. The true nature and ends of Church power.

On this point Dr. Thornwell expressed himself as follows:

"The power of the Church is *exclusively* spiritual." (Vol. IV, p. 449.) "The power of the Church accordingly, is *only* ministerial and declarative." (Vol. IV, p. 383.) "The moral power of opinion is not the kind of power which the Church exercises. Hers is the spiritual power of the Word of God—the testimony of Jesus." (Vol. IV, p. 475.) "But as a Court, we are assembled in the name of Christ, and act by His authority, and in this sense our power in relation to questions of this kind is purely declarative. Now what have we to declare? The Word of the Lord. *We have a faith, and not opinions*, and we speak in the *language of authority*." (Vol. IV, p. 472.) [It may be as well to say here, once for all, that the writer is responsible for italics unless otherwise specified, and uses them not for emphasis so much as to arrest the eye.] The ends to the accomplishment of which this power may legitimately be applied, may be gathered from the following statements:

"It is hence beside the province of the Church to render its Courts, which God has ordained for spiritual purposes, subsidiary to the schemes of any association founded in the human will and liable to all its changes and caprices." (Vol. IV, p. 470). "Let the Church of Christ lend her energies directly to the accomplishment of her own high and glorious mission." From this we may safely infer that he did not look upon the Church as a "public-opinion manufacturing society, a congress-managing society."

Dr. S. Robinson and the letter of the Synod of Kentucky speak even more

explicitly upon the proper ends to which Church power may be applied. The former says: "And as the Church may not employ any other form of agency than those divinely appointed for her spiritual ends; *so, conversely, Divine forms of agency may not be used for any other than these spiritual purposes.*" (Relation of Secular and Spiritual Power, p. 21.)

The latter says:

"Hence this Synod and its Presbyteries have steadfastly protested against and resisted the assumption of authority by Church Courts to advise, direct and assist the civil government in its policy by the exercise of their spiritual authority, or to interpose the power of the spiritual sword for enforcing any theories of social organization, or theories of labor, or political theories, or to direct men as citizens in the choice of their civil policy." (See Distinctive Principles of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, p. 85.)

c. The Church and politics. The following must suffice under this head:

"This Synod is clear that the provinces of Church and State are entirely distinct, and that the Church as such transcends its sphere in pronouncing upon questions political, as the State transcends its sphere in dealing with matters ecclesiastical. The Church, it is true, is to declare and enforce revealed truth, and, among other duties, she is to enjoin obedience to the powers that be. But when the question arises, who and what those powers are, and how far obedience must be carried, the Church must remit the answer to the civil tribunals of the land and *to the dictates of the individual conscience. . . . . General principles she may and must announce*; the eternal principles of the moral law; *but their concrete application to political constitutions and political changes, does not fall within the limits of her power.*" (Collected Writings, Vol. IV, p. 440.) This, at least to the writer's mind, is Dr. Thornwell's clearest and most discriminating utterance upon this momentous question.

The "Declaration and Testimony" men say:

"We testify against every movement in the Church, however cautiously or plausibly veiled, which looks to a *union of the State with the Church, or a subordination of one to the other, or the interference of either with the jurisdiction of the other.*" (See "Declaration and Testimony" specification 14, or Prin. Rev. July '66, p. 427.)

Again, they reject Dr. Hodge's doctrine that "the Church may adjudicate upon 'civil affairs which do not concern the commonwealth' upon the pretense that these affairs 'rise up into the region of morals'" because, say they, it tends "*to obliterate all lines of distinction between the civil and ecclesiastical power.*"

d. The Church and "Societies for Moral Reform" (*Temperance and the like.*)

In 1848, Dr. Thornwell wrote:

"No church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws which shall bind the conscience, *or to issue recommendations which shall regulate manners*, without the warrant, explicit or implied, of the revealed will of God. . . . This General Assembly, as a court of Jesus Christ, cannot league itself with any Voluntary Society."

In 1859, he wrote:

"The Church has no right to league herself with any of the institutions of the State, or such as have for their object mere secular enterprises. . . . At this very General Assembly we have declined to identify ourselves even with the American Presbyterian Historical Society—we have voted it out. We have voted out the Temperance Societies; and I would have the Assembly vote out all the societies of this world, and keep to her proper sphere, and let the socie-

ties keep to theirs. . . . *It is this principle that I deem absolutely indispensable to the purity and success of the Church in her peculiar mission.* . . . Is it claimed that the incidental bearings which these institutions have on religion give the Church a right to meddle with them? See where that principle would carry you. It would make the Church a party in Presidential elections." To the reader, familiar with the course of events in "our sister Church" during the war, this last sentence reads like prophecy. For in 1864, her Assembly, under the influence of this principle, did virtually attempt to make the Presbyterian Church in the non-seceding States a party to the re-election of Mr. Lincoln.

The above extracts need no comment. The positions assumed in them were in the spring of 1860, formally endorsed by the Presbytery of Louisville, under the leadership of Dr. Stuart Robinson.

THE THEORIES CONTRASTED.

The foregoing extracts will enable the reader to form for himself a fair judgment as to the theories of Dr. Hodge and Dr. Thornwell. The writer has endeavored not to conceal the fact that, occasionally, they both expressed sentiments inconsistent with the general tenor of their views and of their conduct. He claims, however, that each had a theory, in the main well defined, and that these two theories are utterly irreconcilable; that the one is sound, safe and Scriptural, while the other is not only unscriptural, but fraught with danger to the peace and purity of the Church and the success of her mission. It will be well to bring these theories into sharp contrast that their distinctive differences may stand out more clearly.

a. As to the mission of the Church.

The one theory is that: The mission of the Church is to *individuals*, not to nations, communities, as such; her mission is to make Christian men and women, not to make Christian commonwealths, kingdoms, banking corporations, railroad syndicates: her mission is to individuals—not in any of the official characters they may sustain, but simply as individuals; she seeks to make, not Christian kings, or Christian legislators, or legislatures, but Christian men. It recognizes the manifold relations existing among men, as those of husband and wife, parents and children, ruler and subject, but holds that the mission of the Church is to qualify the individual for such relations by leading him to Christ and holding up before him certain *general principles*, and that here her duty and her prerogatives end. It denies that she is to prescribe specific rules for the countless moral emergencies arising out of these relations, or to take the concrete application of the general principles she has announced out of the hands of the individual, be he father or son, sovereign or citizen. It holds farther, that the end of her mission is not "simply morality, decency and good order," but holiness; and that while the production of holiness insures "morality, decency and good order," the production of these latter qualities and conditions does not insure holiness. Hence it holds that for the Church to devote her energies to advancing moral reforms, is to divert them from the subject upon which they ought to be concentrated. And this diversion of her energies it holds to be doubly culpable, because it jeopardizes not only the success of her peculiar mission but also all those incidental but inestimable blessings which would inevitably flow from its success, but which, when directly pursued, are apt, like happiness under similar circumstances, to elude the hand that would grasp them.

The other theory is that: The Church's mission is not only to individuals, but to nations and societies, *in their organic character*, and to kings and legislators *in their official capacities*. It holds that it is not enough for the Church,

in the manner above described, to qualify individuals for the various social and civil relations of life, but that she must supervise the details of their conduct in these relations, applying the general principles she has announced, to "particular persons and cases." It denies that the "only duty of the Church as a teacher is to preach the Gospel and to labor for the salvation of men." It affirms that she is not to confine herself "to a purely spiritual vocation," but is to denounce evil and patronize good wherever she finds them. It makes her in some sort "a moral institute of universal good, whose business it is to wage war upon every form" of evil everywhere, and to patronize every scheme of man's invention which in her judgment is "designed and and wisely adapted" to promote the salvation of souls either directly or indirectly.

b. As to the proper ends for the exercise of Church power.

One theory is that: "The power which is given" to the Church "is to be exercised *for spiritual ends only*." It denies that she has a right to exercise it either directly or indirectly for the solution of questions relating to "the policy of States in reference to secular affairs," or to "the principles of Civil Government and the" specific "duties thence resulting." It farther denies that she can wisely and lawfully exercise it, either by way of injunction or recommendation, to give credit to schemes of man's invention for the accomplishment of moral reforms, especially if these schemes are of a mixed character, involving other ends than moral reforms. To illustrate: it was a gross perversion of her ministerial and declarative power when "our sister Church" undertook to commend the W. C. T. U. and its work. *For in reality the temperance work of this organization seems little more than a cover for an effort to revolutionize our whole domestic, civil and ecclesiastical economy.* (See speech of Miss Willard at the 12th annual meeting in 1885.)

The other theory is that: Church power is "the moral power of opinion," as well as "the spiritual power of the Word of God." It farther holds that both the one kind of power and the other may be exercised by the Church for the furtherance of other than spiritual ends; may be subsidized to give currency and authority to a particular interpretation of a civil constitution or treaty, and to secure the continuance in power of a particular administration, and the general acceptance of the details of its policy, (see Dr. Van Dyke's speech before Synod of N. Y. in 1864, and July No. of Prin. Rev. Art. on Assembly) provided *in her judgment* these questions of politics have "risen into the sphere of morals." It farther holds that the Church's power may at any time be lawfully used to give credit and encouragement to such "society for moral reform" as *in her judgment*, is "designed and wisely adapted" to promote, even though it be remotely, the interest of Christ's Church.

c. As to the Church's politics.

The one theory is that: "The State is competent to judge of the moral acts of its citizens," and has "in the natural order, a code of morals given it" of God, the Supreme Ruler, through reason and the light of nature, for the judgment of such acts. It does not deny that "political questions" may "rise into the sphere of morals," but maintains that in such cases the judgment of the Church upon the moral aspects of the question, if warranted at all, must wait upon the judgment of the individual upon its political elements, and must even then be simply an announcement of general principles, the concrete application of which must at last be left to the individual.

The other theory is that: "When political questions rise into the sphere of morals," the judgment of the individual as to the political elements involved must wait upon and follow the judgment of the Church as to the moral elements.

It practically leaves no place for the exercise of the inalienable and inestimable right of private judgment in any of the relations of life.

d. As to so-called grand moral movements of man's devising.

The one theory is that: The Church should vote them out and "keep to her proper sphere," and let such organizations "keep to theirs and do good in their own way without asking the co-operation of the Church." The other theory is that: The Church should take under her careful supervision this swarming brood of humanitarian inventions, rebuking some, counseling, cuddling, and co-operating with others.

Such is the writer's conception of the distinctive features of the two theories that have been under review. Of its correctness the reader has been put in a position to judge for himself.

NON-SECTIONAL, NON-POLITICAL CHARACTER OF JESUS INVOLVED.

The writer does not purpose allowing himself to characterize, as it deserves to be characterized, Dr. Baird's charge that, in contending for this doctrine of the spirituality of the Church, we are making the Church a 'legatee or custodian of the principles and affiliations of an obsolete political party." He prefers to overlook its insufferable insolence and injustice, and to attribute it to "invincible ignorance." It is sufficiently rebutted and refuted

1. By the unquestionable facts recited above as to the origin of this controversy: and.

2. By the farther fact that some of the clearest expounders and ablest defenders of that doctrine for which our beloved Church is to-day sole witness (though alas! by no means so constant or consistent in her testimony as she ought to be) were Northern-born men, Union men of Republican politics, men who lived and died, or are living to-day, in the communion of "our sister Church"— such men as Dr. Geo. Junkin, Dr. Henry J. Van Dyke, Dr. Sam. R. Wilson, Dr. Jas. H. Brookes (not Northern-born, however, I believe), and others. These men, our antagonists in politics, were, and for aught appearing to the contrary, are to-day our allies in regard to this doctrine—not valorous and outspoken as they once were, it may be, but still secret sympathizers. Indeed this fact has been alleged as an argument for union. It is said Dr. S. R. Wilson, author of the "Declaration and Testimony," and Dr. Jas. H. Brookes, one of its ablest defenders, have gone into "our sister Church." Why cannot the rest of us do likewise? The writer has no word of bitterness for these honored men. It is enough to say that, if they have gone out from us, they, unfortunately for themselves, and fortunately for us, have left their principles on record behind them. That their principles are in conflict with the practices of "our sister Church," no one whose opinion is worth anything will deny. This being true, we prefer to adhere to their creed, and let them explain their conduct as best they can. One thing seems certain, namely, that, if we consent to join the adherents to this doctrine now in "our sister Church," we must also consent to protect our principles *quoad hoc* and occupy the same pitiful position of silent protest now enjoyed by these much-to-be-sympathized-with brethren. For when, in the last decade, have they so much as "peeped or muttered" against the gross and growing *Church-Statism* of "our sister Church." It is said that they only await our advent to revolutionize her doctrine on this point. Well, when *twice nought makes something more than nought*, the writer will believe that by a shameless display of moral weakness on our part we can infuse new moral strength into them.

"OUR SISTER CHURCH," HEIR TO DR. HODGE'S DOCTRINE OF THE PROVINCE OF THE CHURCH, AND OUR OWN, HEIR TO THAT OF DR. THORNWELL AND THE MISSOURI AND KENTUCKY DIVINES.

1. "Our sister Church" formally adopted Dr. Hodge's doctrine in 1860 (Prin. Rev. July 1860, p. 540.) True, the paper in which it was set forth was characterized by that disgusting ambiguity that marks only too many ecclesiastical documents, and this enabled Dr. Thornwell to vote for it. But it was none the less drawn by Dr. Hodge, and adopted as embodying his views. If there is any question about this, her uniform practice during and since the war settles it. And the recent delightfully diplomatic utterances of her Conference Committee put a final quietus upon all further questioning in regard to it.

2. That our Church, as a Church, is committed to the theory of Dr. Thornwell and the Kentucky brethren, it would seem impossible to deny. True, she has done, and is doing, things inconsistent with her principles in this respect. True, also, there are those among us who are vigorous dissentients from these principles. But it is none the less a fact that our Church, as *a Church*, is publicly and solemnly pledged to the teachings of Thornwell and the Missouri and Kentucky Divines on this subject. Witness:

a. The fact that she planted herself squarely on this platform in her "Address to all the Churches of Jesus Christ" in 1861.

b. And the fact that she deliberately and solemnly covenanted with the Synod of Kentucky on this platform in 1867.

She may have "sworn to her hurt," and feel obliged on maturer consideration to break a covenant which she now sees ought never to have been made, but *she has "sworn."*

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR RECORD AND THE RECORD OF "OUR SISTER CHURCH."

The writer does not claim that our record is above criticism. He does claim that it differs from the record of "our sister Church" in the following material points, viz:

1. *Her* actions in violation of the true doctrine of the spirituality of the Church took the shape of *elaborate, carefully matured documents, the principles of which were discussed in open Assembly*, some of them for days, *and were, after full discussion, adopted as formal expressions of the sentiments of the body in reference to the relations of Church and State.* This went on year after year for five years. This is not true of our Assembly. That there were from time to time unfortunate and improper references to the civil struggle then agitating the land, the writer believes. What he claims, is that these references *were of such a kind that their inconsistency with our principles might have escaped attention* under the circumstances.

2. *Her* actions in the case of the complaint of the Pine Street church against the Presbytery of St. Louis, and of Messrs. R. P. Farris and S. S. Watson against the Synod of Missouri, are utterly without parallel in our records. In these two famous cases, she permitted the State to trample under foot the rights of Christ as alone King in Zion—so doing violence to the doctrine of the Independence of the Church.

3. *Her action* in 1883 was a *formal review ond ratification* of the actions taken between 1861 and 1869, by either Old School or New School Assembly, in reference to "loyalty and rebellion." This also is without parallel in our records.

4. *Her actions* since the war have been as really and as constantly, though it may be not as offensively, in violation of the true doctrine of the spirituality of the Church as were her actions during the war.

That we as a Church have not wholly escaped the prevailing pestilent *Church Statism* of the day cannot be denied. All that is claimed here is that our sins in this respect have been committed through inadvertence.

5. The final and undeniable distinction is that the *practice of "our sister Church" is in conformity with her principles and her principles are unsound and unscriptural:* whereas the most that can be said of us, is that we have from time to time through inadvertence or under excitement acted *inconsistently with principles which in themselves are sound and scriptural.*

The pressing question to-day for us is, not can we establish the entire consistency of our conduct with our principles during the past, but shall we wittingly and knowingly renounce these principles for all the future? No argument that has been advanced in favor of union has seemed to the writer so puerile as that based on *our inconsistencies.* Our brethren seek apparently to make the record of "our sister Church" *white*, by proving that ours has some ugly spots on it. Their reasoning amounts to about this: If they have done wrong, so have we: why should we not unite and both do wrong together? Will it help us to a more faithful adherence to our principles to cast ourselves into the irresistible current of her corrupt practice?

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH'S SPIRITUALITY.

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of scriptural views on this subject. The "Letter of the Synod of Kentucky" says truly:

"The avoidance of all admixture of human maxims, policies and expediencies in the administration of the government and discipline of the Church, is a duty of the same obligation as to avoid the admixture of human philosophies and theories with the dispensation of the Word, or of human fancies with the dispensation of the sacraments." (Distinctive Principles of Presbyterian Church, in U. S., p. 83.)

A wrong doctrine here must sooner or later infallibly lead to the following sad consequences:

1. The destruction of the peace of our Church Courts and our several congregations by introducing into them the bitter passions of party politics. It only needs a politico-moral issue of such magnitude as to arrest general attention and inflame the passions, to produce in our own Church Courts and congregations disgraceful scenes similar to those which marred the record of "our sister Church" during the war.

2. Endless persecution and relentless ecclesiastical tyranny—such as the faithful witnesses for Christ's crown and covenant were called to endure at the hands of "our sister Church," until finally she cast them out of the synagogue.

3. The ministry and ordinances of religion and the authority of the Church will be brought into public disrepute. It is a sad day when a politician finds it necessary to reprove a Court of Christ, as the Hon. Judge Ewing did the Assembly of "our sister Church" when he said that, "He had been in many political Conventions, yet he must say he had never anywhere seen such relentless persecution as is manifested by this Assembly."

4. Endless heart-burning, divisions, schisms.

5. The obliteration of all lines of separation between the civil and ecclesiastical powers and the final destruction of the *Independence of the Church.* It was well said by an honored member of the Newark Assembly in 1864: "If Church Courts will handle and conclude 'civil affairs which concern the commonwealth,' then an inexorable logic compels one to admit that the commonwealth has a right to know what they are handling and how they conclude them.

I cannot see why, if the Church, as she has, comes in and takes part in the affairs of the State, that the State should not come in and take part in the affairs of the Church?"

This part of this discussion is worthy of fuller statement and illustration, but lack of space forbids.

It is a momentous question that this generation is called upon to decide. These truths which many among us hold all too lightly, are a heritage purchased for us at a great price. They were wrought out in tears and anguish of body and soul by men who have now gone to their reward. God forbid that we should show ourselves such ignorant ingrates as to relegate these holy principles to oblivion along with the political passions of the war.

The question is—not whether, if we were still in the bosom of "our sister Church," our principles would make it incumbent upon us forthwith to separate ourselves and secede from her: but whether, having been cast out from her communion by her passion, and by the providence of God, and that too because of our adherence to these very principles, we can return to her communion? When to do so, we must recede from the principles handed down to us by the founders of our Church, and arrest and reverse the development of doctrine so happily inaugurated by them. Are we ready to assume this responsibility? Surely not, if our principles, in addition to being dearly bought, are sound and scriptural.

IS OUR DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHURCH SCRIPTURAL?

The writer believes that Dr. Baird's question: "Does this mean that there are moral questions which the Bible has not authorized the Church to handle?" (2nd Ed. p. 32) touches the very vitals of this controversy. He said as much to personal friends months before Dr. Baird's pamphlet appeared. For one he thanks Dr. Baird for so clear-cut an issue. This then is the question, or these are the questions upon which the scripturalness of our doctrine hinges:

a. Is the Church authorized in the Word of God to decide *all* questions of *morals* for *all* men: not only those within, but those without her pale; not only for men considered as individuals, but for men as organized into societies, civil corporations and governments?

b. Is it either her *duty* or her *privilege* to lend her aid, either as patron or ally, to *all* parties and projects, not in themselves corrupt, for advancing *moral* reforms in society and in civil government?

To these questions the writer is prepared, so far as he himself is concerned, to return an emphatic negative. He can speak only for himself here, and only give the barest outline of the reasoning that compels him to answer thus.

1. She is not authorized to decide all questions of morals:

a. Because there are some questions of this kind the decision of which turns upon conditions which she is manifestly incompetent to investigate; and if incompetent to investigate these conditions, she is also incompetent to decide questions depending upon them; and if incompetent to discharge the task, unauthorized to undertake it.

Take for instance the debt settlement of the State of Virginia. Here is a moral issue. The same is true of all the endless intricacies of legislation and litigation arising out of it. Shall the Synod of Virginia pass upon the "Riddleberger Bill," the "Coupon Crusher"? How will she proceed? Upon *ex parte* statements? But she is a Court—a Court of Jesus Christ. Upon an examination of the records and of sworn witnesses? There might be difficulties in the way of having the records brought into Court. Who would obey her *subpœna?* Under what penalty would she require obedience to her decision?

Her humblest and most ignorant church member may obtain all the light he needs from the Word of God to guide his conduct in these matters. Whereas, she, as a Court, can obtain none that will enable her to speak to the "faith and conscience" of God's people. Nor is this strange. There is a world of difference between the light needed for the formation of a practical judgment on the part of an individual, and the light required by a Court in order to a proper "finding" in the cases submitted to it.

b. Because there are some questions of morals which the Word of God itself relegates to the individual conscience. Ecclesiastical interference in matters of Christian liberty is ecclesiastical tyranny. There is such a thing as Christian liberty. The essence of this liberty consists in the privilege of deciding for one's self when things indifferent *have risen into the sphere of morals and religion*, and further in deciding upon the questions of morals thus emerging. The Church may and must proclaim the general principle "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." But there are multitudes of questions of practical morals arising under this principle, the decision of which is left to the individual conscience. The Church can neither relieve me of my responsibility, nor wrest from me my right. *She* cannot say that I have sinned, though I may have sinned, in my use of this liberty.

c. Because, to say that the Church is authorized to decide all moral questions, is to obliterate all lines of distinction between the Church and the State, and must result in bringing all the details of human conduct in the varied domestic, social, and civil relations of life, directly under ecclesiastical supervision and control.

Almost all the questions of life are *moral questions*. "The law of the Lord is perfect." It is "exceeding broad." All legislative enactments, judicial findings, police regulations in the last analysis are questions of morals. The Church that undertakes to "apply" the law of God to all "the particular individuals and cases" embraced in its wide sweep, will have its hands full. Legislatures would be simply committees to prepare business for Synods and Assemblies, and Civil Courts would be but instruments for enforcing ecclesiastical decisions.

d. Because the teachings and practice of Christ and His apostles prove clearly that He did not design that the Church should busy herself with the decision of moral questions.

The Pharisees and Herodians came to Christ with one of the burning moral issues of their day (see Matt. xxii: 15–22.) They propounded it to Him in His official capacity as one "who taught the way of God in truth." They intimated that His character for courage and His high claims alike forbade His putting them off. Here is what they said: "Tell us therefore what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?" Mark the question. They ask, not — Is it lawful to give tribute? but, Is it lawful to give tribute *unto Cæsar?* Has the *Roman Government* any lawful claims to our recognition? Politics had risen with them into the sphere of morals and religion. Did Christ, however, allow them to shift their responsibilities on to His shoulders. I trow not. In effect He said to them, Tell me under whose government you live? And when they said "Cæsar's," He said, "Render *therefore* unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Thus He put aside altogether the question about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of Roman rule. And even His decision about the general principle of tribute for the support of government, was based upon their recognition of Cæsar as their master.

The apostles uniformly confine themselves to the laying down of general

principles in regard to all "politico-moral" questions. They say, "Honor to whom honor is due, tribute to whom tribute," etc. They never express approval or disapproval of the official doing of any civil magistrate, high or low; they never sought in any way to shape the legislation of their day. They reproved sin in these persons and cases, by holding up the truth and meekly suffering for it when necessary. If the teachings of Christ and His apostles are to decide this issue, then the Church must content herself to maintain a masterly silence upon many moral questions arising out of man's domestic, social and civil relations. "General principles she may and must announce . . . but their concrete application" must often be left strictly to the individual conscience.

These observations it seems to the writer ought to command universal assent. And yet he fears that he may be regarded by many as a "setter-forth of strange" doctrines. To say that there are moral questions upon which the Church may not pass, seemed to him, for a long time, like denying that the Word of God is "a perfect and sufficient rule for *every* case." But those who will reflect for a little, will see that this difficulty is only apparent. For the Bible is a "perfect and sufficient rule" *for the individual*, as well as for the Church; for the Church, in the sphere assigned to her; for the individual, in the matters in which it reserves to him the right of private judgment and Christian liberty. This perfect and sufficient rule does not divest the individual of all personal responsibility and freedom of action in matters of morals, nor does it invest the Church in her corporate capacity with power to decide all questions of morals for her members. And when Church Courts undertake to pass upon subjects which are in the Word of God reserved to the individual conscience, they may expect to err and to bring endless confusion and scandal upon themselves, for surely they cannot look for the Spirit of God to guide them *in the violations of God's law*.

2. As to the Church's patronizing so-called moral movements, the writer has not time even to outline his argument.

THE "IPSO FACTO" ACT OF "OUR SISTER CHURCH" IN 1866, AND HER CLAIM AS TO THE ASSEMBLY'S DIRECT POWER OVER PRESBYTERIES.

The writer cannot close this paper without at least alluding to a matter which so far has not been touched upon in this discussion. He refers to the position of "our sister Church" in reference to the Assembly's direct power over the Presbyteries composing it.

Our doctrine is that "the power of the whole, is over the *power* of every part." The doctrine of "our sister Church" is that "the power of the whole is *over every part.*"

1. This is the doctrine of the "Gurley Resolutions" which passed the Assembly of "our sister Church" in St. Louis, May, 1866, by a vote of 196 yeas, to 37 nays. Let these resolutions speak for themselves:

Resolved, That the signers of the "Declaration and Testimony," and the members of the Presbytery of Louisville, who voted to adopt that paper be summoned, and they are hereby summoned, to appear before the next General Assembly, to answer for what they have done in this matter, and that until their case is decided, they shall not be permitted to sit as members of any Church Court higher than the Session.

Resolved, That if any Presbytery shall disregard this action of the General Assembly, and at any meeting shall enrol, as entitled to a seat or seats in the body, one or more of the persons designated in the preceding resolution and summoned to appear before the next General Assembly, then that Presbytery

shall *ipso facto* be dissolved, and its ministers and elders, who adhere to this action of the Assembly, are hereby authorized and directed in such cases to take charge of the Presbyterial Records," etc. (See Prin. Rev. July '66, p. 473.)

2. This doctrine is defended at length by Dr. Chas. Hodge, in the pages of the Princeton Review for July 1866. (See pp. 48–89.)

3. It is the settled doctrine of "our sister Church" (see What is Presbyterian Law? p. 257). The question is there asked: "Has the Assembly any direct power over Presbyteries?" The answer is: "It may erect, modify, change and dissolve Presbyteries . . . In 1834, it was done (*i. e.*, a Presbytery was formed) against the decision of the Synod, the General Assembly claiming the right to determine the bounds of Presbyteries (1) when the question was brought by complaint or appeal; (2) under extraordinary circumstances; (3) as the highest judicatory of the Church."

CLOSING REMARKS.

In closing, the writer has only to add the following remarks:

1. His object in writing has been to put his readers in a position to judge for themselves as to the nature and importance of the matters involved in this "re-union discussion."

2. It will be a mistake to infer that the subjects passed under review in this paper, are the only questions that deserve a careful examination at this time.

3. But enough has been said to show that union, under existing circumstances, can only be effected at the expense of principle on one side or the other, or both.

4. Although union is impracticable, there is no reason why there should be either unseemly conflicts, or waste of energies and resources in carrying on the work of the two Churches. Only let "our sister Church" give up her darling idea of a National Church, which is simply her pet political sectionalism projected into the ecclesiastical sphere, and the end is accomplished. If she refuses to do this, let it be distinctly understood that she, not we, is responsible, by reason of words that soothe and *acts that burn*, for all the friction that hinders her work and ours.

WM. M. MCPHEETERS.